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GOODBYE

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THOMAS ROY

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In Case I Say Goodbye

Dear Marianne,
Perhaps I write this letter to you in a moment of weakness. My immediate plan is to pause before sending it, taking a few moments to truly process the events of the last few months between us. I sincerely hope I get a chance to express this verbally so you feel the sincerity in every word. I have no script or predetermined notion in mind; whatever version finds you is the testimony of my heart and mind negotiating proper forward momentum into the next journey. So please, do not take my words as accusations or slander against you. I would hope that by now you know I would not do such a thing, no matter how much my mind attempted to fit our strides into such narratives.

Perhaps the moment to begin was when I told you I had started preparing to come see you in person. It was a moment I craved to find strength

in, to finally reach toward your hand and loving embrace against the fear that plagues us both for such a moment. But rather than feel your fingers interlocking mine... I was met with the revelation that you had been in pain for some time.

I do believe you when you say this has been mulling around for some time, perhaps even without my involvement. The truth is that in spite of that, this silence between us left me pondering much about our relationship and its significance in my life. I confess that in these reflections, there were points where I could have done better. Hindsight may be 20/20, but at the hope of hearing you say "I love you" is still in my chest I have not been able to avoid the reflex of checking my behavior to avoid repeating the same mistakes.

For instance, the number of times I shared something that I created with you; only to become annoyed when your reaction was not what I had hoped for. There is no justification, as it is simply unfair to you how I would try to invite you into my world only to treat the one person I hoped would find shelter in its walls as if she was a prisoner. Another major regret I possess? Not

just checking in to see how you're doing without an ulterior motive for one of our video dates. Even now, as you only wanted to be friends so you could continue your SSRI transition, I have to admit that I have done a poor job of just staying calm.

Though, while part of my thoughts cling to the notion as the major "What if", I cannot help but wonder how much of your decision to be friends is the medication speaking for you. I'm not trying to accuse you of anything, it's just among the possibilities I read about in my anxiety-fueled research binges when you first told me you were starting those pills.

The truth is, Marianne, I don't know what I am doing. I have never loved someone as deeply nor felt as safe. You mentioned that I needed to be free? Despite how my actions may have looked, I have never felt more free. Before you I had constant nightmares from my past that never again emerged in my mind. Despite my perceived hesitations toward some of your ideas, my business started to thrive even further once I integrated them. It's hard not to think of you when I am doing something as simple as driving around, es-

pecially since your help made buying the vehicle possible. But beyond these things, I have not known anyone as kind and amazing; these words are echoed by many others.

I do not want to hide my motivations, or my feelings for you. Part of my physically cannot do so anymore, leading to some of my most reset creative outlets. But to be honest, part of me thinks the adventures that led to my current opportunities were merely the by-product of a socially acceptable addiction. While some mystical elements indirectly led to us finding one another, I've come to realize the very elements that once kept me afloat in the darkest times have now become weighted blinds, making me forget that underneath my Starlight Angel was the proud, strong, yet vulnerable woman I would fall in love with over and over again.

I will not waste breath trying to hide my ultimate hopes. I want to be your husband, to spend the rest of my life with you, and carry forward on this adventure hand-in-hand no matter where it may take us. I know that making that decision will require sacrifice for both of us, more so for you than for me. But when the narratives in both

our minds try to justify giving up, I know beyond a reasonable doubt that if anyone had the chance to go against the odds, it would be us. But it is a decision we both must commit to wholeheartedly and nothing else.

But if the future doesn't happen, it is my hope that you find the happiness, love, and freedom that you have given me. I want to see you soar, to hear that addictive laugh, for the whole of the world to find light in your incredible smile, and for all you embrace to feel the warmth of your spirit. I want for you to know nothing but the hope you have given me. The only tears I hope fall from your eyes should stem only from the joy you cannot contain.

I love you, Marianne, forever and always.

